

stances, but of their own " idle, irregular
and wicked
courses/¹ that the truest charity is not to
enervate them
by relief, but so to reform their characters
that relief
may be unnecessary—such doctrines
turned severity
from a sin into a duty; and froze the impulse
of natural
pity with the assurance that, if indulged, it
would per-
petuate the suffering which it sought to
allay.

Few tricks of the unsophisticated intellect
are more
curious than the naive psychology of the
business man,
who ascribes his achievements to his own
unaided
efforts, in bland unconsciousness of a
social order
without whose continuous support and
vigilant pro-
tection he would be as a lamb bleating in
the desert.
That individualist complex owes part of its
self-assurance
to the suggestion of Puritan moralists, that
practical
success is at once the sign and the reward
of ethical
superiority. " No question/" argued a
Puritan pam-
phleteer, " but it [riches] should be the
portion rather of
the godly than of the wicked, were it good
for them ;
for godliness hath the promises of this life
as well as
of the life to come."^{1*2} The
demonstration that
distress is a proof of demerit, though a
singular com-
mentary on the lives of Christian saints and
sages, has
always been popular with the
prosperous. By the
lusty plutocracy of the Restoration, roaring
after its

meat, and not indisposed, if it could not find it elsewhere, to seek it from God, it was welcomed with a shout of applause.

A society which reverences the attainment of riches as the supreme felicity will naturally be disposed to regard the poor as damned in the next world, if only to justify itself for making their life a hell in this. Advanced by men of religion as a tonic for the soul, the doctrine of the danger of pampering poverty was hailed by the rising school of Political Arithmeticians as a sovereign cure for the ills of society. For, if the theme of the moralist was that an easy-going indulgence undermined character, the theme of the